

LADY BOUNTIFUL.

A STORY WITH A MORAL FOR SOCIAL THEORISTS TO ACT UPON.

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

'That is very good of you, Mr. Bunker. Why do you warn me?'

'Why, anybody can see already that he's taken with your good looks. Don't encourage him. Don't keep company with him. He's been away a good many years—in America—and I fear he's been in bad company.'

'I am sorry to hear that.'

'You saw his sniggerin' sneerin' way with me, his uncle. That doesn't look the right sort of man to take up with, I think. And as for work, he seems not to want any. Says he can afford to wait a bit. Talks about opening a cabinet-makin' shop. Well, he will have none of my money. I tell him that beforehand. A young jackanapes! A painted peacock! I believe, Miss Kennedy, that he drinks. Don't have nothing to say to him. As for what he did in the States, and why he left the country, I don't know; and if I were you, I wouldn't ask.'

With this warning he left her, and Angela went home, trying to realize her own great possessions. Hundreds of houses; rows of streets, this enormous brewery, working day after day for her profit and advantage; and these invested moneys, these rows of figures which represented her personal property. All hers! All her own! All the property of a girl! Surely, she thought, this was a heavy burden to be laid upon one frail back.

CHAPTER V.

THE CARES OF WEALTH.

It is, perhaps, a survival of feudal customs that in English minds a kind of proprietorship is assumed over one's dependents, those who labor for a man and are paid by him. It was this feeling of responsibility which had entered into the mind of Angela, and was now firmly fixed there. All these men, this army of seven hundred brewers, drivers, clerks, accountants, and the rest, seemed to belong to her. Not only did she pay them the wages and salaries which gave them their daily bread, but they lived in her own houses among the streets which lie to the right and to the left of the Mile End Road. The very chapels where they worshipped, being mostly of some Nonconformist sect, stood on her own ground—everything was hers.

The richest heiress in England! She repeated this to herself over and over again, in order to accustom herself to the responsibilities of her position, not to the pride of it. If she dwelt too long upon the subject, her brain reeled. What was she to do with all her money? A man—like her grandfather—often feels joy in the mere amassing of wealth; to see it grow is enough pleasure; other men in their old age sigh over by-gone years, which seem to have failed in their labor or effort. Then men sigh over by-gone days in which more might have been saved. But girls can not be expected to reach these heights. Angela only weakly thought what an immense sum of money she had, and asked herself what she could do, and how she should spend her wealth to the best advantage.

The most pitiable circumstance attending the possession of wealth is that no one sympathizes with the possessor. Yet his or her sufferings is sometimes very great. They begin at school where a boy or girl, who is going to be very rich, feels already set apart. He loses the greatest spur to action. It is when they grow up however, that the real trouble begins. For a girl with large possessions is always suspicious lest a man should pretend to love her for the sake of her money; she has to suspect all kinds of people who want her to give, lend, advance, or promise them money; she is the mere butt of every society, hospital, and institution; her table is crowded every morning with letters from decayed gentlemen and necessitous clergymen, and recommenders of 'cases'; she longs to do good to her generation, but does not know how; she is expected to buy quantities of things which she does not want, and to pay exorbitant prices for everything; she has to be a patron of Art; she is invited to supply every woman throughout the country that wants a mangle with that useful article; she is told that it is her duty to build new churches over the length and breadth of the land; she is earnestly urged to endow new Colonial bishoprics over all the surface of the habitable globe.

Then she has to live in a great house and have troops of idle servants. And, whether she likes it or not, she has to go a great deal in society.

All this, without the least sympathy or pity from those who ought to feel for her, who are in the happy position of having no money. Nobody pities an heiress; to express pity would seem like an exaggerated affection of virtue, the merest panderism of

superiority; it would not be believed. Therefore, while all the world is agreed in envying her, she is bemoaning her sad fate. Fortunately she is rare.

As yet, Angela was only at the commencement of her troubles. The girls at Newnham had not spoiled her by flattery or envy; some of them even pitied her sad burden of money; she had as yet only realized part of the terrible insolation of wealth; she had not grown jealous, or suspicious, or arrogant, as in advancing years often happens with the very rich; she had not yet learned to regard the whole world as composed entirely of money grabbers. All she had felt hitherto was that she went in constant danger from interested wooers, and that youth, combined with money bags, is an irresistible attraction to men of all ages. Now, however, for the first time she understood the magnitude of her possessions, and felt the real weight of her responsibilities. She saw, for the first time, the hundreds of men working for her; she saw the houses whose tenants paid rent to her; she visited her great Brewery; and she asked herself the question, which Dives no doubt frequently asked—What she had done to be specially set apart and selected from humanity as an exception to the rule of labor? Even Bunker's complaint about the difficulty of putting by a little, and his indignation because she herself could put by so much, seemed pathetic.

She walked about the sad and monotonous streets of East London, reflecting upon these subjects. She did not know where she was, nor the name of any street, in a general way she knew that most of the street probably belonged to herself, and that it was an inexpressibly dreary street. When she was tired she asked her way back again. No one insulted her; no one troubled her; no one turned aside to look at her. When she went home, she sat silently for the most part in the common sitting-room. The boarding-house was inexpressibly stupid except when the sprightly young mechanic was present, and she was even angry with herself for finding his society pleasant. What could there be, she asked, in common between herself and this workman? Then she wondered, remembering that so far she had found nothing in her own mind that was not also in his. Could it be that two years of Newnham had elevated her mentally no higher than the level of a cabinet-maker?

Her meditation brought her, in the course of a few days, to the point of action. She would do something. She therefore wrote a letter to her solicitors to get her, immediately, two reports, carefully drawn up.

First, she would have a report on the Brewery, its average profits for the last ten years, with a list of all the employees, the number of years' service, the pay they received, and, as regards the juniors, the characters they bore.

Next she wanted a report on her property at the East End, with a list of her tenants, their occupations and trades, and a map showing the position of her houses.

When she had got these reports she would be, she felt, in a position to work upon them.

Meantime, Mr. Bunker not having yet succeeded in finding a house suitable for her dress-making business, she had nothing to do but go on walking about and to make herself acquainted with the place. Once or twice she was joined by the Idle Apprentice, who, to do him justice, was always ready to devote his unprofitable time to these excursions, which his sprightliness enlivened.

There is a good deal to see in and about Stepney, though it can hardly be called a beautiful suburb. Formerly it was a very big place, so big that, though Bethnal Green was once chopped off at one end and Limehouse at the other, not to speak of Shadwell, Wapping, Stratford, and other great cantles, there still remains a parish as big as St. Pancras. Yet, though it is big, it is not proud. Great men have not been born there nor lived there: there are no associations. Stepney Green has not even got its Polly, like Paddington Green and Wapping Old Stairs; the streets are all mean, and the people for the most part stand upon that level where respectability—beautiful quality!—begins.

'Do you know the West End?' Angela asked her companion when they were gazing together upon an unlovely avenue of small houses which formed a street. She was thinking how monotonous must be the daily life of these dreary streets.

'Yes, I know the West End. What is it you regret in your comparison?'

Angela hesitated.

'There are no carriages here,' said the workman; 'no footmen in powder or coachmen in wigs; there are no ladies on horseback, no great squares with big houses, no

clubs, no opera-houses, no picture-galleries. All the rest of life is here.'

'But these things make life,' said the heiress. 'Without society and art, what is life?'

'Perhaps these people find other pleasures; perhaps the monotony gets relieved by hope and anxiety, and love, and death, and such things.' The young man forgot how the weight of this monotony had fallen upon his own brain; he remembered, now, that his companion would probably have to face this dreariness all her life, and he tried in a kindly spirit to divert her mind from the thought of it. 'You forget that each life is individual, and has its own separate interests; and these are apart from the conditions which surround it. Do you know my cousin, Tom Coppin?'

'No; what is he?'

'He is a printer by trade. Of late years he has been engaged in setting up atheistic publications. Of course, this occupation has had the effect of making him an earnest Christian. Now he is a captain of the Salvation Army.'

'But I thought—'

'Don't think, Miss Kennedy; look about and see for yourself. He lives on five-and-twenty shillings a week, in one room, in just such a street as this. I laughed at him at first; now I laugh no longer. You can't laugh at a man who spends his whole life preaching and singing hymns among the Whitechapel roughs, taking as a part of the day's work all the rotten eggs, brickbats, and kicks that come in his way. Do you think his life would be less monotonous if he lived in Belgrave Square?'

'But all are not preachers and captains in the Salvation Army.'

'No; there is my cousin Dick. We are, very properly, Tom, Dick, and Harry. Dick is, like myself, a cabinet-maker. He is also a politician, and you may hear him at his Club denouncing the House of Lords, and the Church, and Monarchical Institutions, and hereditary everything, till you wonder the people do not rise and tear all down. They don't, you see, because they are quite accustomed to big talk, and it never means anything, and they are not really touched by the wickedness of the Peers.'

'I should like to know your cousins.'

'You shall. They don't like me, because I have been brought up in a somewhat different school. But that does not greatly matter.'

'Will they like me?' It was a very innocent question, put in perfect innocence, and yet the young man blushed.

'Everybody,' he said, 'is bound to like you.'

She changed color and became silent for awhile.

He went on presently.

'We are all as happy as we deserve to be, I suppose. If these people knew what to do in order to make themselves happier, they would go and do that thing. Meantime, there is always love for everybody, and success, and presently the end—is not life everywhere monotonous?'

'No,' she replied, stoutly; 'mine is not.'

He was thinking at the moment that of all lives a dress-maker's must be one of the most monotonous. She remembered that she was a dress-maker, and explained.

'There are the changes of fashion, you see.'

'Yes, but you are young,' he replied, from his vantage-ground of twenty-three years, being two years her superior. 'Mine is monotonous when I come to think of it. Only, you see, one does not think of it oftener than one can help. Besides, as far as I have got, I like the monotony.'

'Do you like work?'

'Not much, I own. Do you?'

'No.'

'Yet you are going to settle down at Stepney.'

'And you, too?'

'As for me, I don't know.' The young man colored slightly. 'I may go away again, soon, and find work elsewhere.'

'I was walking yesterday,' she went on, 'in the great church-yard of Stepney Church. Do you know it?'

'Yes—that is I have not been inside the walls. I am not fond of church-yards.'

'There they lie—acres of graves. Thousands upon thousands of dead people, and not one of the whole host remembered. All have lived, worked, hoped much, got a little, I suppose, and died. And the world none the better.'

'Nay, that you can not tell.'

'Not one of all remembered,' she repeated. 'There is an epitaph in the church-yard which might do for every one:

"Here lies the body of Daniel Saul, Spitalfields weaver; and that is all."

That is all.'

'What more did the fellow deserve?' asked her companion. 'No doubt he was a very good weaver. Why, he has got a great posthumous reputation. You have quoted him.'

He did not quite follow her line of thought. She was thinking in some vague way of the waste of material.

'They had very little power of raising the world, to be sure. They were quite poor, ill-educated and without resource.'

'It seems to me,' replied her companion, 'that nobody has any power of raising the world. Look at the preachers and the writers and the teachers. By their united efforts they contrive to shove up the world and keep it from falling lower. Every now and then down we go, flop—a foot or two of civilization lost. Then we lose a hundred years or so until we get shoved up again.'

'Should not rich men try to shove up, as you call it?'

'Some of them do try, I believe,' he replied; 'I don't know how they succeed.'

'Suppose, for instance, this young lady, this Miss Messenger, who owns all this property, were to use it for the benefit of the people, how would she begin, do you suppose?'

'Most likely she would bestow a quantity of money to a hospital, which would pauperize the doctors, or she would give away quantities of blankets, bread, and beef in the winter, which would pauperize the people.'

Angela sighed.

'That is not very encouraging.'

'What you could do by yourself, if you pleased, among the working-girls of the place, would be, I suppose, worth ten times what she could do with all her giving. I'm not much in the Charity line myself, Miss Kennedy, but I should say, from three weeks' observation of the place and conversation with the respectable Bunker, that Miss Messenger's money is best kept out of the parish, which gets on very well without it.'

'Her money! Yes, I see. Yet she herself—'

'We working-men and women—'

'You are not a working-man, Mr. Goslett.' She faced him with her steady, honest eyes, as if she would read the truth in his. 'Whatever else you are, you are not a working-man.'

He replied without the least change of color:

'Indeed, I am the son of Sergeant Goslett of the—th Regiment, who fell in the Indian Mutiny. I am the nephew of good old Benjamin Bunker, the virtuous and the disinterested. I was educated in rather a better way than most of my class, that is all.'

'Is it true that you have lived in America?'

'Quite true.' He did not say how long he had lived there.

Angela, with her own guilty secret, was suspicious that perhaps this young man might also have his.

'Men of my class,' she said, 'do not as a rule talk like you.'

'Matter of education—that is all.'

'And you are really a cabinet-maker?'

'If you will look into my room and see my lathe, I will show you specimens of my work, oh, though unbeliever! Did you think that I might have "done something," and so be fain to hide my head?'

It was a cruel thing to suspect him in this way, yet the thought had crossed her mind that he might be a fugitive from the law and society, protected for some reason by Bunker.

Harry returned to the subject of the place.

'What we want here,' he said, 'as it seems to me, is a little more of the pleasures and graces of life. To begin with, we are not poor and in misery, but for the most part fairly well off. We have great works here—half a dozen Breweries, though none so big as Messengers'; chemical works, sugar refineries, though these are a little depressed at present, I believe; here are all the docks; then we have silk-weavers, rope-makers, sail-makers, watch-makers, cigar-makers; we build ships; we tackle jute, though what jute is, and what we do with it, I know not; we cut corks, we make soap, and we make fire-works; we build boats. When all our works are in full blast, we make quantities of money. See us on Sundays, we are not a bad-looking lot; healthy, well-dressed, and tolerably rosy. But we have no pleasures.'

'There must be some.'

'A theatre and a music-hall in Whitechapel Road. That has to serve for two millions of people. Now, if this young heiress wanted to do any good, she should build a Palace of Pleasure here.'

'A Palace of Pleasure!' she repeated. 'It sounds well. Should it be a kind of a Crystal Palace?'

'Well! It was quite a new idea, but he replied as if he had been considering the subject for years. 'Not quite—with modifications.'

'Let us talk over your Palace of Pleasure,' she said, 'at another time. It sounds well. What else should she do?'

'That is such a gigantic thing, that it seems enough for one person to attempt. However, we can find something else for her—why, take schools. There is not a public school for the whole of East London. Not one place in which boys—to say nothing of girls—can be brought up in generous ideas.

She must establish at least half a dozen public schools for boys and as many for girls.'

'That is a very good idea. Will you write and tell her so?'

'Then there are libraries, reading-rooms, clubs; but all these would form part of the Palace of Pleasure.'

'Of course, I would rather call it a Palace of Delight. Pleasure seems to touch a lower note. We should have music-rooms for concerts as well.'

'And a school for music.' The young man became animated as the scheme unfolded itself.

'And a school for dancing.'

'Miss Kennedy,' he said, with enthusiasm, 'you ought to have the spending of all this money! And—why, you would hardly believe it—but there is not in the whole of this parish of Stepney a single dance given in the year. Think of that! But perhaps—' he stopped again.

'You mean that dress-makers do not, as a rule, dance? However, I do, and so there must be a school for dancing. There must be a great college to teach all these accomplishments.'

'Happy Stepney!' cried the young man, carried out of himself. 'Thrice happy Stepney! Glorified Whitechapel! Beautiful Bow! What things await ye in the fortunate future!'

He left her at the door of Bormalack's, and went off on some voyage of discovery of his own.

The girl retreated to her own room. She had now hired a sitting-room all to herself, and paid three months in advance, and sat down to think. Then she took paper and pen and began to write.

She was writing down, while it was hot in her head, the three-fold scheme which this remarkable young workman had put into her head.

'We women are weak creatures,' she said, with a sigh. 'We long to be up and doing, but we cannot carve out our work for ourselves. A man must be with us to suggest or direct it. The College of Art—yes, we will call it the College of Art; the Palace of Delight; the public schools. I should think that between the three a good deal of money might be got through. And oh! to think of converting this dismal suburb into a home for refined and cultivated people!'

In blissful reverie she saw already the mean houses turned into red brick Queen Anne terraces and villas; the dingy streets were planted with avenues of trees; art flourished in the house as well as out of it; life was rendered gracious, sweet and lovely.

And to think that this result was due to the suggestion of a common working-man!

But then, he had lived in the States. Doubtless in the States all the working-men— But was that possible?

CHAPTER VI.

A FIRST STEP.

With this great programme before her, the responsibilities of wealth were no longer so oppressive. When power can be used for beneficent purposes, who would not be powerful? And beside the mighty shadow of this scheme, the smaller project for which Bunker was finding a house looked small indeed. Yet, was it not small, but great, and destined continually to grow greater.

Bunker came to see her from day to day, reporting progress. He heard of a house here or a house there, and went to see it. But it was too large; and of another, but it was too small; and of a third, but it was not convenient for her purposes; and so on. Each house took up a whole day in examination, and Bunker's bill was getting on with great freedom.

The delay, however, gave Angela time to work out her new ideas on paper. She invoked the assistance of her friend, the cabinet-maker, with ideas, and, under the guise of amusing themselves, they drew up a long and business-like prospectus of the proposed new institutions.

First, there were the High Schools, of which she would found six—three for boys and three for girls. The great feature of these schools was to be that they should give a liberal education for a very small fee, and that in their play-grounds, their discipline, and, as far as possible, their hours, they were to resemble the great public schools.

'They must be endowed for their masters' and mistresses' salaries, and with scholarships; and—and—I think the boys and girls ought to have dinner in the school, so as not to go home all day; and—and—there will be many things to provide for each school.'

(To be Continued.)

CHILDREN'S, Ladies' and Gentlemen's Warm Feet Slippers for indoor wear at S. Carsley's, Notre Dame street.

Brassworkers and finishers throughout the States report trade as on the lift. Times are fairly good, but no extra room.

Mrs. D. Lemay has taken an action for \$10,000 damages against Mr. Fred. Neil, stevedore, on account of the death of her husband, who was killed on October 19 last, by the fall of a bucket full of coal while unloading the steamship "Buenos Ayres," in the employ of the defendant.